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Author(s)	Shiraishi, S. Saya
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## The Birth of Father and Mother in the Indonesian Classroom

Saya S. SHIRAISHI\*

### I Introduction

When Pramoedya Ananta Toer wrote a story, "*Jang Sudah Hilang* [What has been lost]" and placed the Indonesian conversation, "*Mengapa menangis* [Why are you crying]?" "*Ibu—bambu itu menangis* [Mamma, the bamboo is crying]," into the mouths of a mother and her little boy, who could have known no Indonesian but Javanese, something significant took place for both languages [Pramoedya Ananta Toer 1952: 14].<sup>1)</sup> It was not a mere remembrance of things past, that is, the childhood world of Java. It was a literary construction of the Indonesian past, the Indonesian river and landscape, Indonesian childhood, the Indonesian mother, father, and family, by means of the young national language, Indonesian. It was a creative effort to achieve a new identity of being an Indonesian.

In those early days of Indonesian independence, Adinegoro, who is now known as the "Father of Indonesian Journalism," used to tell his children and young journalists that Indonesia did not have any culture of its own yet, that what it had was only the national language, and that, therefore, they would have to create and define their cultural identity with this language.<sup>2)</sup>

Indonesia as a nation-state was officially born on August 17, 1945, out of the Netherlands' East Indies. Indonesian, as the national language, has played a significant role in unifying the diverse population and constructing the image of a unified single nation. On August 17, 1995, Indonesia celebrated the 50th anniversary of its independence. This is a good opportunity to examine how the Indonesian family is now pictured in children's readers after a half century of national independence, and to reflect upon what has become of the national language.

This inevitably leads us to an examination of the nature and history of "family-ism"

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\* 白石さや; Department of Cultural Anthropology, Faculty of Human Studies, Kyoto Bunkyo University, 80 Senzoku, Makishima-cho, Uji-city, Kyoto 611, Japan

1) The quotation is from the unpublished, mimeographed translation of *Yang Sudah Hilang* by Benedict Anderson, "Things Gone."

2) Interview with his daughter in Jakarta in September, 1990.

that now prevails as Indonesia's dominant political culture. "Inevitably" because, as we will see soon in the following pages, the national family portrayal is the outgrowth of nationalist political "family-ism." The political "family-ism" in independent Indonesia did not derive directly from the indigenous family systems.

Family and kinship systems in developing countries are often seen as the core of "traditional" social structure that resists change. The "family-ism" in Indonesia's economic, political and social life appears to support this argument. Indeed, the notion of "persistent" family-ism in the modern public sphere seems to authenticate the antique pre-colonial and pre-modern origin of the nation. It is precisely because of this presumed authenticity and antiquity that family-ism has thus become a comforting source of national pride and identity and the ground for hardened conservatism in the young nation. But is the matter that simple?

In the essay, I will discuss the contemporary Indonesian family construction in children's literature and the history of the national language in which the family has been constructed.

## II The Family in Children's Literature

The Indonesian language is still largely a school-tongue even today ; that is, the language one learns at school from teachers rather than on one's mother's lap at home. Primary school attendance is essential for young citizens to learn the language and participate in national life. Indeed, according to *Statistik Indonesia*, 97% of children aged 7 to 12 years old attended school in 1987. School textbooks and other reading materials have been printed and distributed in mass numbers. There are far too few literary works to satisfy a rapidly expanding young reading population. The need to produce children's literature is enormous. Besides, having been educated for only a few years at primary schools, the majority of the adult population also reads children's literature. Children's books are thus read by virtually every member of the household, parents, aunts and uncles, household helpers and occasional visitors.<sup>3)</sup>

Children's literature in Indonesia at present is characterized by such diverse themes as family life, school activities, national celebrations, friendship, folk tales, and religious teachings. Such literature also includes biographies of national heroes, tales of historical

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3) The majority of the adult population at present is educated only at primary schools, and it is still a luxury for many Indonesian households to spend money on books. A weekly TV and movie tabloid, *Monitor*, sold a record number of 600,000 copies a week in 1989-90. Nationally uniform government textbooks, unpublicized "million sellers," are distributed to all school children and have had a tremendous effect in homogenizing Indonesian and its literature.

events, stories promoting the latest government projects, translations of European fairy tales, new local fantasy tales, and cartoons, both in translation and in Indonesian [S. S. Shiraishi 1994].<sup>4)</sup> Each genre reveals intriguing aspects of the imagery of the new nation. Every story and every choice of words in it enrich or restrict the young national language and literature, and contribute to the imagining of the national community [Anderson 1983].

The “family life” stories appear to be among the most robust of all the genres. They describe everyday family life at home. The basic pattern of family relations in these stories shows amazing uniformity: the authoritative father, the ever-giving mother, and the obedient children, whose mistakes start the stories and are corrected by the parents at the end.

Let us examine the way family relations are constructed. The title of the story I will discuss first is “Silence Does Not Mean Approval” [Utami 1991: 32 – 33]. A six-grade boy, Yoga, wants to go swimming with his friend. The quotation is from the best-selling children’s weekly magazine, *Bobo*. The magazine is published by a newspaper company and sells between 240,000 to 260,000 copies every week at newsstands on the streets, through schools that receive some commission for it, and through home delivery with the morning newspaper.<sup>5)</sup> The stories are generally quite popular and are regarded as highly educational.

As on previous days Mama kept silent. Yoga sighed with relief and finished lunch. After asking permission from Mama, Yoga left for swimming. . . .

That evening, Yoga’s body felt feverish. He had an awful headache. Yoga lay down on his bed. . . .

“Ma, I have an awful headache,” moaned Yoga when Mama felt Yoga’s forehead with her hand. . . .

“You are too tired, Yoga. You have gone swimming almost every day and have not taken naps. Your body has a limit. If we spend too much of our energy without getting enough rest to balance, we will become sick in the end.” Mama placed a cold compress on Yoga’s forehead.

“But why did Mama keep silent? Doesn’t it mean that Mama gave Yoga permission to go swimming?”

Mama smiled.

“Silence does not mean approval, Yoga! Aren’t you already grown up now? Mama does not like to treat Yoga as a little child who needs to be told everything every time. . . . Yoga must know by now what is best to do,” said Mama.

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4) Children’s cartoon books, along with animated TV programs, are making an impressive appearance in the last few years.

5) Interview with an editor of *Bobo*, Jakarta, May 1991.

The mother speaks to her little boy only after he has made a mistake and suffered from it. As the title indicates, the lesson that the child should learn from the story is not that he should not go swimming every day, but that Mama's silence does not mean that she agrees with his conduct.

The sentence, "Silence Does Not Mean Approval," in fact was going around among Jakarta journalists at the time. It originated from the General Assembly, the MPR, of March 1988.<sup>6)</sup> Once in every five years, its one thousand delegates meet in Jakarta and elect the president and the vice president. Everyone knew that Soeharto would be chosen as President for a fifth term. The main issue, therefore, was the selection of the vice president. Previously, President Soeharto had always named one candidate for the vice presidency, who was then duly "chosen" unanimously at the MPR. In 1988, however, Soeharto kept silent even though one candidate had his unmistakable support.

Taking advantage of the president's unprecedented silence, another candidate, quietly supported by Gen. Benny Moerdani and army officers he led, dared to run for the vice presidency. A few hours before the formal voting, however, the "wrong" candidate withdrew in tears after frenzied pressure from party leaders who had been summoned by the president. The punishment for his "mistake" was dire. He was ousted from the chairmanship of his party, and now he is almost a social and political outcast. Like Yoga, he should have known better.

Soeharto himself explained in his autobiography published a year later [Soeharto 1989 : 543 – 555] that he did not propose any name because he expected that the people should know by then who was the right candidate without being told by the president. In his mind, the political maturity of the nation was synonymous with the people's insightful knowledge and acceptance of the president's unspoken intention.

The nation has thus learned that "silence does not mean Father's approval," and this knowledge, crucial for political survival, has been given to the younger generation, Yoga and his contemporaries, through the "educational" children's readers. Here we find striking interchangeability between national political matters and family affairs. What happened at the MPR between the *Bapak* President and his Assemblymen and women can be so easily and so smoothly turned into family stories. Why and what does it mean?

Let us examine another case.

In 1990, Soeharto was vague as he always is on the question of presidential succession. Indonesians as usual wondered about the succession, and the play "*Sukses*" drew wide attention in Jakarta. During this periods, the story, "The Crown Prince of the Kingdom of Thessavio" [Suhardi 1990 : 11 – 23] was published. It is the story of Prince Alfonso, and how he qualifies himself as the successor to the king.

Unlike Disney fairy tales in which a prince meets a beautiful young lady and marries her at the end, Alfonso's love, Nydia, kills herself in the first episode when Alfonso's

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6) On the General Assembly of March 1988, see leading news weeklies in Jakarta.

Father-King declares that she is the wrong person to be the marriage partner of the future king. Alfonso suffers from his loss of Nydia because he truly loved her. Having experienced passionate love and desire, the young man now understands what it is that he has to suppress and renounce in order to qualify as the future king. One cannot learn how to suppress desire without ever having felt it.

Twin sisters, Sosya and Yona, are then introduced to Alfonso as the candidates who meet all the conditions set by the traditions of the kingdom. Because they look so perfectly like Nydia, the prince even screams, "Nydia! Oh...you have come back! But... why have you become two?" All three women are identical. With Nydia gone, only one woman out of the remaining two is the right answer and he has to discover which one. Alfonso tells his people that he will jump into the fire rather than choose one over the other, because that would hurt the feelings of the people and cause division and disharmony. Making a choice based on one's own desire, the story tells the reader, is an act of childish immaturity. That was why Nydia was a wrong answer, and Alfonso learned the lesson well. In response, Yona volunteers to jump into the fire herself so that Alfonso need not make a choice. The prince declares at this moment that Yona, who is prepared to sacrifice her self for the sake of the kingdom, is the right partner for the future ruler, who has also shed his self. Making a choice is a symbolic act of declaring who one is, and it signifies immaturity in Thessavio. A young man grows and perfects his being as the ruler of the kingdom by learning how to overcome desire and, consequently, by achieving abstemiousness. After the prince declares that Yona is the right answer, Sosya quietly jumps into the fire and eliminates the wrong answer from the stage. It is the right performance for the wrong candidate. After all, the wrong candidate for the vice presidency was pushed into social and political death. The happy nation is left with the qualified crown prince and his rightful partner.

The message is clear enough. The successor to power should qualify him/herself by suppressing all personal desires and ambitions. Position and power will then come to the one who has proved his/her maturity. The moment one reveals his/her desire of becoming the president (or vice president, or whatever), s/he is disqualified for the position. He would become the king by containing his personal wishes, and his subjects would have the insight to understand his unstated intentions and respect them. This is how the Kingdom of Thessavio should be ruled in a mature way in accordance with "tradition." The young man is thus educated to succeed the New Order Father-King, and so are the young readers. No wonder Soeharto waits for people to come to request him to stay on in his position every five years.<sup>7)</sup>

Both stories seem to rely on a theory that the child should be free and should learn

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7) At the 1993 General Assembly, Soeharto was again requested by many diverse groups to stay on as President and one of his former adjutants was officially recommended by all parties to be Vice President.

from his/her mistakes, but it is in fact turned into a theory that the child has to know, or find out, what the right answer is which is hidden behind parental silence. The child learns that his mistake will invite dire punishment, accepts the right answer without questioning it, and matures. It is a structure of self-policing thinly disguised as parental guidance for the child. And this “disguise” works, because the nation is now imagined as a family, and not as a fraternity of “horizontal comradeship” any more [Anderson 1991 : 7 ].

This uniformity in the portrayal of parent-child relations is remarkable in light of the enormous diversity of ethnic cultures Indonesia contains inside its boundary. There are, according to Hildred Geertz [1963 : 24], 300 ethnic groups, who speak more than 250 distinct languages as mother tongues, and whose kinship systems include matrilineal, patrilineal, and bilateral patterns. What does the national “family-ism” actually represent, if there are far more than one family and kinship structural model to choose from? Where does this uniform Indonesian family portrayal come from and why is it so easily, so smoothly, and so closely associated with national politics? The key to answering these questions lies in the history of the Indonesian language, in which all the stories are written and the Indonesian family is constructed.

### III History of the National Language

“Indonesian” was the name nationalist students gave to Malay in 1928, which originally was the lingua franca in the archipelago and then became the administrative language for the Dutch East Indies state. In 1899, less than a century ago, Kartini wrote in a letter to her Dutch pen-friend [Kartini 1985 : 45] :

What do we speak at home? What a question, Stella, dear. Naturally, our language is Javanese. We speak Malay with strange people who are Easterners, either Malays, Moors, Arabs, or Chinese, and Dutch with Europeans.

The lingua franca was thus spoken with strangers, but it was not spoken by fathers and mothers to their young children at home. The familial vocabulary of the lingua franca, such as “father” and “mother,” did not signify a specifically defined fatherhood or motherhood.

Under Dutch colonial rule, Malay was employed as the administrative language for the “natives,” a new classification for the population of the archipelago. Malay was spoken, written, and read by traders and sailors, officials, clerks, missionaries, mercenaries, prostitutes, and railway employees, and eventually by trade union activists, journalists, writers, teachers, and nationalist politicians [Ming 1983 : 65 – 93 ; T. Shiraishi 1990 : passim]. The “colonized natives” were “awakened” and adopted Malay as the language of

their soon-to-be-born motherland, Indonesia. The national language was not anyone's mother tongue that had commenced in an unknown past. It was the language with which to define the future national identity. The "natives" transformed themselves into a "nation" by adopting Malay as their national language to express their aspiration for unity.

Anderson wrote about the advantage of such a lingua franca being chosen as the national language of the nation in making [Anderson 1990 : 104] :

This was all the more possible because Malay as an "inter-ethnic" language, or lingua franca, had *ipso facto* an almost statusless character, like Esperanto, and was tied to no particular regional social structure. It had thus a free, almost "democratic" character from the outset, which had its own appeal to an intellectual class, which at one level (the desire to be on equal terms with the colonial elite) aspired to egalitarian norms.

The lingua franca was tied to no particular social structure, either family system or social hierarchy. Because no one owned the language, everyone, regardless of one's ethnic origin, could claim to own it and illustrate with it the yet-to-be society. Nationalist leaders made their speeches at rallies in Indonesian. It was often their third language, after their mother tongue and Dutch, but they prided themselves on mastering Indonesian and used this language to create the imagery of a new society.

Education of young children was a significant part of the nationalist movement. The network of Taman Siswa schools led by Ki Hadjar Dewantara<sup>8)</sup> expanded from Java to the Outer Islands and became the innovative core of the nationalist educational movement [Tsuchiya 1987]. Educated and ambitious, but jobless, young men and women became its teachers. They were strongly influenced by European educational theories of the time. Maria Montessori and Rudolf Steiner were their educational heroes as much as Karl Marx and Gandhi were their political heroes. They debated and experimented with new educational methods in their classrooms. Experimental "family-style" instruction was employed. Children addressed their teachers as "*Bapak* [Father]" and "*Ibu* [Mother]" in Indonesian. These *Bapak* and *Ibu* let the children, "*Anak*," play and learn freely at their own pace and at their own direction while the "Parents/Teachers" remained in the background [McVey 1967 : 128 – 149].

The educational reformers also embraced "family-ism" (*ke-keluarga-an*) as the organizing principle of the Taman Siswa school system [Tsuchiya 1987 : 112 – 119]. Taman Siswa schools did not have any "employees." Instead, the schools had "family members," who jointly formed the organization and shared its resources. They addressed each other as "*Bapak*" and "*Ibu*." "*Bapak*" turned out to be highly capable of integrating diverse social, linguistic, ethnic, and kinship differences. Anyone who joined Taman Siswa and

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8) For Ki Hadjar Dewantara's thought and person, see Scherer [1975].



shared its ideals was qualified to become *anak* to its leaders, regardless of his background. *Bapak-anak* was a new bond with which to create a new community. It functioned as a catalyst to precipitate the creative cultural activities for which Taman Siswa was renowned.

Ki Hadjar Dewantara, himself the school's first officially designated "*Bapak*," later wrote the history of Taman Siswa [McVey 1967 : 114 – 115] :

We used the terms "Bapak" and "Ibu" because we considered that the terms of address currently in use, "Tuan [Malay—Sir]," "Njonjah [Madam]," "Nonah [Miss]," and the corresponding Dutch terms, "Meneer," "Mevrouw," and "Juffrouw," and also the terms in use in Java, such as "Mas Behi," "Den Behi," and "Ndoro," which implied superiority and inferiority of status, should be abolished from Taman Siswa. We introduced the use of the terms "Bapak" and "Ibu" not only for when pupils spoke to teachers but also for when younger teachers spoke to older ones. We never once spelled this out as a "regulation," but this kind of appellation soon came to be used in educational institutions across Indonesia. Not only that, after the Indonesian Republic became independent, it was even suggested that these terms should be used formally by younger officials in addressing older officials.

With the terms "*bapak*" and "*ibu*," the nationalists intended to create a new society in which complex colonial socio-political hierarchies were simplified into gender and age distinctions. When the Taman Siswa teachers and graduates manned the new Republic's government en masse after independence,<sup>9)</sup> "*bapak*" and "*ibu*," which were born in Taman Siswa classrooms and grew up at political meetings, occupied government offices.

At the beginning of the Guided Democracy period (1959 – 65), "family-ism" provided a model in the wake of the "failure" of parliamentary democracy [Feith 1962]. Political leaders and government officials were addressed as "*Bapak*" and "*Ibu*." Their leadership style came from the instructional method of Taman Siswa teachers who watched the children from behind. There was no Indonesian home-born "father" or "mother" model yet. In those days President Sukarno and Kartini, who was accorded the title as the "Mother" of Indonesian nation, were often portrayed as the "teachers" standing in front of a blackboard, surrounded by young pupils. The distinction among political leader, classroom teachers, and parents, all of whom were given the Indonesian terms of address, "*bapak*" and "*ibu*," was rather embryonic. The classroom thus emerged unambiguously as a metaphor for Indonesia. Indeed, Indonesia was one huge classroom in which there were

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9) During the revolution, revolutionaries addressed each other by "Saudara [Brother/Sister]," which made no distinction of seniority or sex, and called the leaders the term "Bung [Brother/Comrade]," such as "Bung Karno" for Sukarno. Both of these terms are now virtually extinct. In the initial stage of internet communication in the early 1990s, some Indonesian youth addressed others as "Saudara." The system of address in Indonesian requires attention of its own.

only *Pak/Bu Guru* (Father/Mother Teachers) and their *Anak* (Children).

The first *Bapak* President, Sukarno, was a marvelous orator, who could shake the hearts of the nation and affect the course of its history with each speech he made and with each expression he invented or incorporated from a wide range of European as well as Javanese sources into the national language. Along the exhilaration of newly attained national independence, Indonesian spread across the archipelago through the networks of radios and schoolrooms. Parents were proud to see their children speak and sing in Indonesian. Some young parents sang the national anthem as a lullaby for their babies.<sup>10)</sup>

In search of an “authentic” Indonesian, that is, non-Western, leadership style “of its own,” Sukarno incorporated Javanese theatrical traditions into Indonesian politics. The young nation began to claim that it was an old nation with a long and sacred tradition. In the process, *Bapak*, along with the national language, acquired newer shades of Java’s antiquity. Sukarno, who was then in his sixties and no longer a young brilliant student-nationalist-leader of the 1920’s, increasingly became an authoritative *Bapak* President of the nation.

After the abortive coup of 1965, more than five hundred thousand people were killed in Indonesia’s countryside [Crouch 1978]. This tragedy has never been fully and freely discussed and analyzed inside Indonesia. Indonesian, which had once created, spread, and given life to the imagining of a new nation, kept silent at this crucial hour, and refused to reveal the truth behind the bloodshed. Order and stability were restored to the nation by military might. When a silently smiling army general, Lt. Gen. Soeharto came to power and assumed the title of the second *Bapak* President, *Bapak* captured the silence behind which the unspoken truth of the killings was stashed. Soeharto emerged in the eyes of the nation more through the visual media of magazine photos and TV news than through the auditory medium of radio. The New Order stands on this silence that permeates the contemporary usage of Indonesian. The nation has now become addicted to the national pastime of guessing what is behind the silent smile of *Bapak* President who is, in turn, keeping watch on his children, that is the adult citizens, from behind. Public opinion polls on matters of national politics are rarely conducted. What matters is *Bapak* President’s decisions, which the newspapers try to guess or challenge, not “public” opinion, to which the mass media pay little attention. “Family-ism” ceased to be an open possibility for young nationalists to define their future Indonesian society. It now is viewed as having the right answer prescribed in the name of the “past/tradition.”

“Guiding From Behind” is the phrase which best captures the essence of Indonesian family-ism. In Javanese-turned-Indonesian, it is “*Tut Wuri Handayani*,” which, used mantra-like, generates the sense of mysterious Javanese wisdom and hence the aura of authentic antiquity. Yet, Soeharto’s autobiography, which carries a two-page long footnote to define the concept, does not leave out the precious memory of experiments

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10) Interview in Jakarta in 1989.

attempted in the national educational movement [Soeharto 1989 : 582 – 583. Quotation is from its English version 1991 : 497 – 498].

The principles for the true education of the child were introduced by Ki Hadjar Dewantara, who is considered to be the architect of Indonesia's educational system, known as the Among System. This system gives as much opportunity as possible to children to develop genuine self-discipline, through their own experience, their own understanding and their own efforts. The important thing is to watch that this opportunity does not endanger the child himself or pose a threat to others.

The above footnote was attached not to the President's comments on child education but to his statement which clarifies his principle of government. "Guiding from behind" is the principle with which Soeharto's New Order regime rules the adult citizens of the Republic.

Obviously, the historical fact that the family principle was initially introduced, articulated, and defined in the classrooms of Taman Siswa schools as its educational and national organizational ideal was too important to be forgotten, even if its emphasis is shifted from children's freedom in the classroom to the punitive eyes that watch the citizens from behind. Meanwhile the influence of European reformist educational theories is largely forgotten and buried under the darkening shadow of Javanese. As Kenji Tsuchiya rightly points out, however, this "Java" was a product of Dutch Javanology. Neither "Javanization of Indonesian national culture" nor "Indonesianization of Javanese tradition" can fully describe the phenomena. Crafting the memory and re-inventing the tradition are obviously in progress.

Yet, the historical course "*bapak*" took was a highly arbitrary, unplanned development in nationalist history. In fact, the actual father in the family was and still is addressed mostly in the respective mother tongues of his children, in Achinese, in Batak or in the many other languages Indonesia contains. Indonesian itself has an "*ayah*," the begetter of the child. In the dictionary endorsed by the Department of Culture and Education, we find the mixed definitions of "*bapak*" that provide us with an outlook on its historical past and its contemporary usage [Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan 1989 : 80] :

1. male parent ; *ayah* ;
2. a male relative who may be regarded to be the same as *ayah* (such as *ibu's* brothers or *bapak's* brothers) ;
3. a person who may be considered as a parent or a person of respect (such as teachers, village heads) ;
4. address for older male ;
5. one who protects (pioneer leaders, and those with many followers) : *Ki Hadjar Dewantara dipandang sbg bapak pendidikan nasional* [Ki Hadjar Dewantara is regarded as the *bapak* of national education] ;
6. official : *biaya menghibur dan menjamu makan bapak dianggap mengurangi laba kotor perusahaan* [The expense of entertaining and serving food for *bapak* is considered to reduce gross business income].

The meanings presented in 5 and 6, for which the compilers of the dictionary give illustrative sentences, are the most commonly used today. The strong association between Ki Hadjar Dewantara and “*bapak*” is not missed, even though lost almost completely is that it was his personality that provided a living image to the empty word at the beginning. The prevailing performance of contemporary government officials is adding a new meaning to “*bapak*.”

How sagacious “The *Bapak* of New Order Indonesia” Soeharto may be, it is clear that he cannot keep watch of all his children. Indonesia has the fourth largest population in the world. It is crucial to maintain the myth of Father watching the children from behind in support for the structure of national self-policing. Children’s books are highly ideological in this sense of political socialization, for they clearly try to reproduce and teach the myth to children. Learning Indonesian today means learning not only its grammar and syntax, but also what has to be kept unsaid and how important it is to know what lies behind the silence of parents. The critical message of “silence does not mean approval” in this regard may well be that “silence does not mean that Father/Mother is not watching you.” It is better still if the child finds happiness in being watched and seeks for it.

#### IV A Happy Child of the Family

Under the New Order, political, social, and economic conditions have stabilized and schools have been built. School textbooks and other reading materials have been printed and distributed through government and private channels. Most of these publications are under direct or indirect government censorship, which effectively discourages diverse family portrayals from emerging in Indonesian literature.

February 6, 1995 was Pramoedya’s 70th birthday and June 8, 1995 was President Soeharto’s 74th birthday. They are the two most outstanding architects of the current Indonesian “family.” All Pramoedya’s works, however, have been banned from circulation in Indonesia today. The document the Attorney General produced to ban his recent book, *Glasshouse*, says that the following quotation from Pramoedya’s book, among others, “disparages national moral values” [*Decree of the Attorney General of the Republic of Indonesia Number : KEP-061/J. A./6/1988*] :

“How happy European children are. They are free to criticize, to declare their disbelief in a policy, and without being punished, let alone exiled. Those who are criticized and those who criticize lose nothing, let alone their freedom. Rather, they advance by correcting each other. . . . Try to criticize your Kings. You would have been killed by the sword before uttering your final words. . . .” (*Glasshouse*, p. 175)

The juxtaposition of parent-child relations with king-subject relations is, again, striking. Pramoedya's statement has proved to be correct because this critical book is banned.

Why did the Attorney General's censor find the above statement injurious to national moral values and ban it from circulation at the cost of substantiating its contents? I believe it has less to do with Pramoedya's forthright criticism of the restriction of freedom of expression than with the alternative child-parent model he provides in the name of European children. It is common for high-ranking government officials to explain the practice of censorship as "parental" guidance for "children." After all, as Philip Aries has stated, when "indecent books" were stored away and expurgated editions were provided for the use of children, the modern concept of childhood marked its beginning [Aries 1962: 109]. In Indonesia's political arena where the association of children with citizens is not problematic, censorship is justified as the rightful exercise of parental guidance. As long as citizens acknowledge and accept this "parental" right of the state, the regime will not be threatened by the criticism of censorship.

It is now clear why Pramoedya is threatening to the regime. He is threatening, because he provides the Indonesian language with a different model, a different possibility for parent-child relations. He writes that European children are happy because they have the right to criticize parents/kings. The target of his attack is the parental right itself.

Now, let us examine the third story, *Roni has a Baby Sister* [Sahid Putra 1988] in order to observe how happiness is defined for young Indonesian children. Roni is a young boy who goes to kindergarten. One day, his baby sister arrives at his home and Roni discovers that the parental love he had monopolized has now shifted to his baby sister, Ita. His parents' attention is focused on the baby, away from Roni.

Now Mother does not come to pick him up (after school) anymore.

Roni comes back with his friends.

Each day Mother takes care of Ita.

Roni has to play by himself.

Roni is left alone, unattended and free, and he suffers. In the end, however, he overcomes the pain of loss of parental love by becoming a trusted assistant to his mother. He helps his parents by keeping watch and reporting on his younger sister.

Wah, Ita's pants are wet, Mother.

Get a change from the bedroom, said Mother.

And don't forget the talcum powder.

Roni is happy to carry out [his mother's request].

In the last illustration of the picture book, Roni's parents are gazing at Roni with

affection, who in turn is pointing at his baby sister. Because of Roni's help, the parents are relaxed and trustingly watching Roni alone. No need for them to keep a serious watch on both children simultaneously. Roni would have the insight to understand the parents' wishes without being told and "is happy" to carry them out.

The picture tells us that Roni is redirecting the flow of affectionate attention of his parents toward the baby. He transmits the parental love, like a holy child, to his younger sibling while sacrificing his own desire of monopolizing it. In so doing he transforms parental love into restrained humane love of elder family members and offers it to Ita, the junior member of the family. Parental love thus circulates among the family members, assigns them positions in the family and roles to play, and entrusts power that accompanies responsibilities. Roni now finds satisfaction in conducting his duties. The family in Indonesian is constructed on this little boy's sacrifice and accomplishment. The family, which otherwise could have remained a biological accident, becomes a social and cultural institution with its own lasting structure of affection and power. In the illustration the parental gaze is rooted in affection for their children and signifies the trust with which parents give some of the children responsibility and power. This trust provides happiness to the chosen children. They are proud of being recognized as mature trusted members of the family able to keep watch over their juniors. This picture of harmonious family structure thus nicely completes the police state.

Now Roni is always joyful.

He enjoys helping Mother take care of Ita.

He loves his sister, and also Mother and Father.

Father and Mother enjoy seeing him.

How holy the picture of this happy young boy is in contrast to the European children Pramoedya depicts, who stand with their fingers pointing at their parents/kings and criticize this or that. They have learned nothing about respect for parents, nothing about responsibility and self-sacrifice, and nothing about the happiness of being mature, responsible and accomplished family members! For Pramoedya, however, the child's maturity can only be attained by establishing one's self against authority, whether that of parents, teachers, or kings, though they mean the same thing in New Order Indonesian.

The family is thus constructed on the notional basis of relations between parents and children and between older siblings and younger siblings, and on the conceptional basis of children's maturity. It is no wonder then that the cultural construction of the family constitutes a crucial domain in which national politics and identity is contested, negotiated, defined, and articulated. School textbooks and children's literature, which are effectively controlled by the state and self-censorship, are two most effective ways to produce, reproduce, and transmit this state-sponsored family ideology and family portrayal to members of the nation. The government ban of Pramoedya's works attests that

the battle is still going on. At this stage of national history, the fast growing field of children's literature is producing and reproducing the portrayal of *bapak* as family-father and *ibu* as mother. *Bapak* and *ibu* have finally reached the family home through school textbooks and children's stories. Through the cultural construction of the "family," presumably the sphere of people's private lives, state politics penetrates into and defines Indonesian society.

It is beyond the scope of this essay to examine how this family-ism is presented, contested, resisted, and negotiated in classrooms, in school textbooks, in family life, in popular music and literature. But these are questions I have discussed elsewhere and therefore do not need to dwell on in this paper [S. S. Shiraishi 1982; 1992; 1995b]. Furthermore, by the 1990s, the global consumer culture and global media reached Indonesia with greater diversity, intensity, and constancy than ever before. The impact of children's TV programs, both imported and domestic, on family life needs to be studied carefully to understand the fate of Indonesian family-ism [S. S. Shiraishi 1994; 1995c].

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